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HON. T. L. CLINGMAN, OF N. C.,

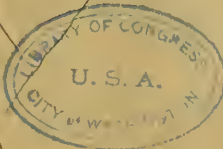
IN FAVOR OF

HIS PROPOSITION FOR A MEDIATION IN THE EASTERN WAR.

DELIVERED

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, JANUARY 3, 1855.

25-10



WASHINGTON :

PRINTED AT THE CONGRESSIONAL GLOBE OFFICE.

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MEDIATION IN THE EASTERN WAR.

The House being in the Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union—

Mr. CLINGMAN said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I will ask the attention of the committee, not to the subject upon which my friend from South Carolina [Mr. KEITT] has so eloquently addressed the committee, for I should not like to attempt to glean in a field which he has reaped so carefully, but to another question which has some intrinsic merits, and which I hope to be able to present in the interval that will elapse prior to the usual time of adjournment.

It will be recollected that, at an early day of this session, I offered a proposition, suggesting the propriety of this Government offering its mediation to the belligerent Powers of Europe. The following is the proposition, as modified by me:

A Joint Resolution requesting the President to tender the mediation of the United States to the Powers engaged in the Eastern war.

Whereas, the people of the United States see, with regret, that several of the great Powers of Europe are engaged in a war which threatens to be of long duration, and disastrous in its consequences to the industrial and social interests of a large portion of the civilized world; and being, under the favor of Providence, in the full enjoyment of the blessings of peace, distant from the theater of conflict, disconnected with the causes of quarrel between the parties belligerent, and, as a nation, having no immediate interest in the contest, and no purpose to interfere, forcibly or in an unwelcome manner, nevertheless are of opinion that the controversy may be susceptible of pacific adjustment, through the interposition of a neutral and friendly Power: Therefore—

Be it resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That we would view with satisfaction a tender to the belligerents of the mediation of the United States, provided it should be in accordance with the President's views of the public interests.

My object at that time was simply to get the subject before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, of which I am known to be a member, leaving it to the discretion of that committee to act upon it as to them might seem best. Since then, there has been a great deal of comment upon that subject by the press generally. The proposition has been assailed in some quarters, and defended with abil-

ity in others. The course of remark has been such, that I desire to make a short explanation of my views in relation to this subject, and of the reasons which governed me in making the movement.

I do not propose to speak as a member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs now, because I have not the right, under the rules of the House, to refer to anything which occurs in the committee until it shall think proper to make a report to the House. I desire only to meet some of the objections which doubtless induced gentlemen to vote against the proposition at the time when it was first moved.

It is said, in the first place, by objectors, to be an intervention on our part with the affairs of foreign Governments. If it be *intervention*, it is precisely *such* intervention as this Government has practiced from its foundation. Every Minister sent abroad is sent to influence the action of some foreign Government, and to induce it so to regulate its action as to benefit, and not injure us. In point of fact, we have ourselves had several instances of mediation submitted to us, which we have accepted, thereby admitting that it was not such intervention as gentlemen would now exclude us from offering to foreign Governments. Our Ministers are instructed to interfere with the action of foreign Governments, so far as it may affect us, and no further; and hence they are not expected to look to the internal action of any Government, but merely to its external relations, because in these latter we ourselves have an interest. For example, if the Emperor of Russia should deprive us of the trade of the ports of the Black Sea, or Baltic, our Minister, Mr. Seymour, would be instructed to remonstrate against it. If that interruption should arise from a conflict between Russia and some other Power, why then we might appeal to both of the belligerent parties. In this particular instance, our trade is interrupted in those seas by the existing war, and our Government has a right to relieve us from such an injury, if it is practicable for it to do so.

A gentleman over the way said, the other day,

when I first brought up this proposition, that he hoped that the war between Russia and the allied Powers would continue for fifty years. I take it for granted that he did not express this benevolent wish [a laugh] from any opinion that it was advantageous to the parties engaged in it; but he must have made the remark to carry the impression that the United States would derive some advantage from it. It will be conceded, on all hands, that it will give us no glory and no additional territory. If we are to be benefited, therefore, it must be in a pecuniary point of view, either by increasing our exports, that is to say, enhancing the value of what we have to sell, or diminishing the price of what we have to import or purchase.

Let us examine this matter briefly, at the outset of the argument, first with reference to what we have to sell.

Our principal article of export is cotton; and now, in the face of two short crops, it is down to less than eight cents. My own opinion is, and I say it with deference to the opinions of other gentlemen, that but for the war, cotton would probably be now worth eleven or twelve cents, as it was in 1850 and 1851. I say so, because the recent supplies do not, I think, bear a greater ratio to the present demand of the world than did the crops in the years referred to. If so, the loss on this article alone, will make a difference of at least forty millions of dollars in the value of our exports; and, in point of fact, I have no doubt that the war makes a difference of twenty-five to forty millions in this respect alone, besides losses in tobacco and other articles. Gentlemen will say to me, perhaps, that breadstuffs are increasing in value, but they forget that the drought of last year so destroyed the crops in most of the grain-growing States, that we shall have nothing to spare for the next twelve months. We have then to take the chances of deriving an advantage two years hence; if we should then happen to have produce to sell, as a set-off to the large and heavy losses that are falling on us.

But, in point of fact, it is the ability of Europe to purchase that determines the demand for and price of breadstuffs. I took occasion some years ago to examine the reports made by committees of the British Parliament in relation to the condition of the laboring population of England. It appeared that during periods of distress and famine the laboring classes were compelled to give up in succession, as the pressure increased, such articles as were not indispensable; and that, for example, they first gave up sugar, then meat, after using it for a time only once a week, then bread, and finally they relied upon the potato alone. It appeared, from the investigation made at that time, that there was a disposition to consume a large amount of provisions if they had had the ability to obtain them. Necessity was the sole measure of their purchases. If the war goes on in Europe, with its heavy taxation diminishing the wealth and means of the people there, I doubt very much whether they will have the ability, to any great extent, to pay for our produce, even if we should have a large surplus. But even if it should prove otherwise, it is not probable that this additional demand will make up for the loss upon the other articles to which I have alluded.

Again, specie is being rapidly drawn abroad from

his country to satisfy the demands of the belligerents. There is, by consequence, an extraordinary pressure in the eastern cities, and extending itself into the interior of the country, so as seriously to cripple all business transactions, and produce heavy losses to the community. Stocks of all kinds have also greatly fallen in value, to the detriment of many of the States, as well as of individuals. Besides all this, the shipping interest has suffered, and is suffering extremely.

During the great wars in Napoleon's time, owing to the fact that Great Britain was excluded from most of the continental ports, our ships had the carrying trade. Such, however, is not now the case; but there are, in fact, nearly as many foreign ships engaged in trade as before the war began, owing to the fact that Russia has not the means of molesting the Allies on the sea. In fact, while the number of carriers remains about the same, the absolute value of freights is likely to be diminished, so that really the whole shipping interest is languishing, and the value of ships is twenty or thirty per cent. less than it was a few months ago. A gentleman behind me, from the maritime region, says that it has diminished fifty per cent. Doubtless he is right on this point.

It is also probable, if the war continues for years, we shall suffer as purchasers. It is true that certain kinds of manufactures seem to have fallen in value. It must be remembered, however, that the present supply was created for a state of peace. One of the effects of a fall of prices is to diminish the amount produced. It will also follow, that if laborers are forced to serve in the armies—and on this account, and also by reason of exorbitant taxation, manufacturing establishments are broken up—there must be a corresponding rise in the value of articles produced. These are not new opinions with me; for in 1850, I contended, while discussing the tariff, that one of the reasons why manufactures were so cheap, was that a long peace in Europe had caused the wealth and labor, formerly expended in wars, to be employed in production, and thus brought down the prices of articles, and put them in the reach of a larger number. If this was a sound argument, as I still think, then the reverse, viz: withdrawing labor and capital from production, and expending it in war, will tend to raise prices in those commodities.

I refer to all these matters to show that our interests are suffering from the effects of this war; how much it is not easy to determine. My own opinion is from fifty to a hundred millions of dollars a year. I have no doubt that it is largely more than the expenses of this Government. Now, if this be so, is it not worth while to see if any measures can be devised to remove the cause of such a loss?

But it may be said that this is only temporary, and that matters will soon get right. On the contrary, it strikes me that these evils must continue and be permanent. England and France have already sent more than one hundred and fifty thousand men to the East. Now if they cost the Allies as much per man as our soldiers did in Mexico, it will be upwards of one thousand dollars per man for a campaign; and this, in the aggregate, amounts to one hundred and fifty millions. Besides this, they have already made an enormous expenditure of money for the naval

armaments, both for the Baltic and the Black seas. So that the whole expenditure may be nearly twice that sum. From the English papers, I observe that the British Government is about building a hundred and twenty steam gun boats, at a cost of \$250,000 each. That item alone will amount to \$30,000,000. The Russian and Turkish expenditures are also very large, so that the entire war expenses must reach several hundred millions.

Now the money expended in this manner is as completely lost to the world as that invested in the Arctic when she went down into the waters of the deep sea.

It is supposed that the Allies have lost forty or fifty thousand men, including those who have been slain in battle, died of disease, or have been permanently disabled. The Russian loss is greater, especially if we take into account the campaign on the Danube. The same is probably true of the Turks. The loss of all must exceed one hundred thousand men. Now, North Carolina is an average-sized State, in population, and she has only one hundred thousand voters. There has then been a number of men destroyed as great or greater than all the voting population of my State—men in the prime of life, men selected for their bodily vigor, and many of whom were men of intellect and education. All these are swept away. The effect of the war is far more disastrous than an epidemic disease which sweeps over a country, and takes away a like number of men, women, and children, indiscriminately.

My object in making these remarks is to show that an immense amount of the wealth of the world, and a very large number of producers, as well as consumers of the products of our labors, are annihilated. I hold that such a loss is injurious to the commercial interests of every civilized country in the world, and especially to that of the United States.

To prove the truth of this proposition, let us suppose the United States to be the only civilized country in the world, and all the rest to be filled with savages, we should have then no exports and no imports. This is evident as soon as stated. As in that contingency, all our surplus productions would perish on our hands, I need not argue that this state of things would be immensely injurious to us. I maintain that, as you destroy the wealth of the civilized world to any great extent, you approximate that condition to which I have alluded. For instance, suppose that other nations were thrown back to the condition of things which existed twenty-five years ago. We then sold less than thirty millions of dollars worth of cotton. If Europe were in the same condition as at that time, and we had now a hundred millions to sell, but could find a market for only thirty millions, where should we find ourselves? The extra amount of seventy millions would rot on our hands. But I take the further position, that even if this war, or any other cause, should keep the rest of the world stationary for the next ten years, we should be greatly losers, because we are constantly increasing our productions; and hence, if there should not be a proportionate increase in the markets of the world, we should be losers.

I think, therefore, that the proposition can be maintained as a sound one in political economy, that you cannot destroy a large amount of the wealth of the world, without injury to us as a

great commercial nation. There may be exceptions to this rule here and there, but as a general proposition, it holds good. If, then, the war be injurious to us, financially and commercially, will it benefit us politically? In reference to the question of the balance of power in Europe, it is true that it is not a matter for us to interfere with. But I may say that you could not change that balance of power without prejudicing us. For example, if Russia becomes omnipotent, and crushes the western commercial nations, though the Czar might himself be as just and as moderate as our own Washington, his successors might not be so, and it is easy to see that their conduct could change things to our injury. If the Allies, on the other hand, should prove decidedly victorious, their ascendancy might give them, not only greater power, but also greater inclination to interfere with us on this side of the globe. Looking, therefore, to the mere question of the balance of power in Europe, you cannot change it without putting us in a worse condition than we now are. I hope it will remain evenly balanced, so that each Power may be able to hold others in check, and prevent mischief.

But having barely adverted to these topics to show that this war is an evil to us, I pass now to the consideration of the other great question. Is there anything in the attendant circumstances of a character to induce a belief that our country might exert an influence to bring the war to a close? This, Mr. Chairman, is a question of great delicacy, as it involves an examination of the grounds of the war itself. If I were to enter into a discussion of its causes, I should speak of things which persons in Europe, perhaps, understand better than I can do here. In the next place, I might get up such a debate as would lead to a discussion of the merits of the several contending parties, and put ourselves in a position which neutrals ought not to occupy. I therefore feel the full force of the caution given by the old Roman poet, to those who tread on ashes that may conceal fires underneath. Nevertheless, I desire to make a suggestion or two on this point.

The war originally rested upon a very narrow basis, so small that the parties themselves did not expect it to produce a war. This is clear from their procrastination and tardiness in making adequate preparations for so great a contest. In fact, it was supposed, at one time, that they had settled the difficulty. The Czar himself is represented to have said that the war is one "for which, judged by its apparent grounds, there is no reason; and it is contrary to the moral, industrial, and commercial interests of the entire world." It is true, that he goes on to charge that the purpose of the Allies is to limit the power of Russia. Well, if that be their purpose, of course any offer of mediation from us would most probably lead to no favorable result. But I do not understand that the Allies have planted themselves upon that ground as yet. And even if they have for a moment entertained such notions, the formidable resistance they have met with when attacking what was supposed to be the exposed point of the Czar's dominions, will go far to satisfy them that it is not an easy matter so to change the map of Europe as to deprive Russia of any portion of her territory. I do not believe they will persist in any such purpose. They are governed by wise and

sagacious statesmen; and, in view of the difficulties which present themselves, I do not think they entertain the idea that, without a longer struggle than either of these Governments are willing to make, they can materially diminish the power of Russia.

All history shows that the apparent strength of alliances is deceptive. Where all the parties are acting in good faith, and with equal zeal, it very frequently happens that, from the want of proper concert of action, they fail to accomplish their object. All Europe at one time assailed France unsuccessfully, and Napoleon himself, at a later day, carried most of the European nations with him against Russia, but his reverses caused Austria and other Powers to secede and join his enemies, so that he was in the end overwhelmed. I take it for granted, therefore, that these sagacious statesmen will not rely so fully on this alliance, powerful as it seems to be, as to press the matter to the extreme I have alluded to.

It does not strike me, Mr. Chairman, that it is the interest of either of these Powers to desire a prolongation of the war. England is a commercial nation. The English people are brave, and energetic, and patient, and so long as their Government tells them it is necessary to carry on the war they will submit to sacrifices. But England can have no hope of acquiring territory, so as to compensate her for these sacrifices. This remark applies equally to France. Her Emperor seems to have been directing his energies of late very much to the improvement of the interior of his own country, in all respects, and to the beautifying of Paris, its magnificent capital. I do not, therefore, believe that the Allies will at present desire to prolong the war. And very clearly it cannot be the interest of Russia to have war rather than peace. The Emperor of Russia has a territory twice as large as that of the United States. It is but thinly settled, and the facilities of communication between the different parts of it are not such as they should be. He marches men a thousand miles from Moscow to the Black Sea or the Danube, and they are decimated two or three times over by disease and fatigue, ere they reach the point of action. Now, you and I know very well, sir, that railroads from Moscow and St. Petersburg to the Danube, the Crimea, and the Caspian, would make Russia stronger now than she would be with the whole Turkish empire annexed, without these facilities. I take it for granted that a sagacious ruler, like the Czar, would rather improve the condition of his country, in this respect, than prolong such a war. Great Britain is just the reverse of Russia in this respect; and by reason of her compactness, insular position, and maritime supremacy, she is a formidable antagonist to any country under the sun, having one league of sea coast.

But, Mr. Chairman, I have no doubt that there were some mistakes made originally. I think it highly probable that the parties took the successive steps that led them into this war without foreseeing where they would carry them. The Emperor of Russia may not have expected such an alliance when he took possession of the Principalities, and the Allies probably thought he would recede when they made their demonstration. But, sir, they have now placed themselves in a position where neither can well make the first move to-

wards a settlement, without a sacrifice of pride, and perhaps of prestige. Their condition is well described by Vattel, in a few sentences, which I will read to the committee. He says:

“Two nations, though equally weary of war, often continue it merely from the fear of making the first advances to an accommodation, as these might be imputed to weakness; or they persist in it from animosity, and against their own interests. Then common friends effectually interpose, offering themselves as mediators. And there cannot be a more beneficial office than that of reconciling two nations at war, and thus putting a stop to the effusion of blood. This is an indispensable duty to those who are possessed of the means of succeeding in it.”

These sentences, Mr. Chairman, express fully what I would say on this point. But if the contest be not terminated now, it must soon become a general European war. It will next year probably get into Germany and Italy, and be more destructive than the wars of Napoleon, because the means of aggression and destruction are greater at this time than they were in his day. When the tri-colored flag is on the Danube, or the Vistula, the impetuous glory-loving Frenchman will have brought back vividly the recollections of Marengo, and Jena, and Austerlitz, and Wagram. All Europe will be in a blaze, and the war will fall with destructive and crushing force on the industrial and lower classes, who, in such times, are always the greatest sufferers.

There are some who look with hope and pleasure to this condition of things. They say that the Governments will be overthrown, and the cause of liberty advanced. I have no doubt but that some of the existing Governments will be put down, but I do not concur in the opinion that republicanism will gain. You may see one tyrannical Government overthrown, and another, stronger and more tyrannical, erected in its stead. The only liberty which is worth preserving, is that which is founded upon law. And from the days of Julius Cæsar down to the present time, “arms and laws have not flourished together.” On the contrary, during military struggles, despotism raises its head and dominates over the land amidst the clangor of arms. To protect life and property, power must be given to the existing Governments. The greater the perils which surround them, the higher the powers with which they must be invested. Men will submit to any exactions, therefore, to support vast military armaments. But let there be peace and security, and these very armaments, being no longer necessary to the safety of the State, soon become intolerable and will be discarded.

Sir, the history of modern Europe sustains this position. It was after a period of peace that the first French revolution exhibited itself, and at the close of the long and desolating wars to which it gave rise—I mean when the Congress of Vienna sat—liberty lay low all over Europe. It was after a long period of peace that the revolution of 1830 shook down the French monarchy, and extended its vibrations into distant Poland. It was after another long period of peace that the revolution of 1848 blazed out in France, illuminating Lombardy, Italy, and Hungary, until its light was dimmed and extinguished by the smoke of battle.

Sir, our neighbor, Mexico, has had war enough in the last fifty years to have made her people the freest on earth, and yet, though many tyrannical Governments have been put down there,

the cause of civil liberty has not advanced. Nor has it in the South American States; nor in the world generally, during hostile struggles. What I mean to say is, not that war may not be sometimes necessary to protect liberty, but I affirm that liberty does not usually spring out of war; that where you have one case of that kind, I can point to a hundred of a contrary tendency. Looking, therefore, simply to the interest, of the masses of Europe, I would rather have peace than war. In peace you have the railroad and telegraph and the newspaper. Every newspaper, and letter, and message is an atom thrown on the side of liberty. You will find that as men become wealthier they will become more intelligent and more tenacious of their political and personal rights.

These views, Mr. Chairman, accord with our own political system. We have the smallest army and navy of any of the great nations, and our policy has been that of peace, in the main, from the days of Washington. There are, too, passages in our own history, which render it imperative that we should make the movement which I have indicated. It is well known that during our revolutionary struggle, France interfered on our side, and ultimately became our ally, and aided us until the end of the struggle. But for that intervention it is highly probable that the assembly which I am addressing to-day would not exist. And, sir, while alluding to this, I find myself unexpectedly in the presence of one who calls up recollections; I cannot see, at this moment, without emotions, the gentleman on my left. [Mr. CLINGMAN looked at M. Lafayette, who was sitting near him.]

A VOICE. "Who is it?"

It is, (said Mr. CLINGMAN, continuing,) he whose grandsire is pictured on that tapestry, (pointing to the full length portrait of the Marquis de Lafayette, on the left of the Speaker.) When we remember the past, made vivid by the sight of that picture and this living representative, is there one who can doubt but that we owe a deep debt of gratitude to France. While I would not pretend that we ought, under the circumstances, to take part, by force, on her side, I nevertheless maintain that we are under the highest obligations to do everything consistently with our own interest, to relieve France from danger or difficulty.

At a later period in our history, when we were at war with England, in 1812, Russia tendered her mediation. That mediation was, in the language of Mr. Monroe, the Secretary of State, "willingly accepted" by our Government. Great Britain declined it, but subsequently, and after she had triumphed over her great adversary in Europe, and was prepared to turn all her forces against the United States, and thus give the war a much more serious and formidable character, it is well known that the interference of Alexander of Russia contributed, in a powerful manner, towards the pacification which took place. Russia, too, it appears, then, has strong claims to any good offices we can render her.

Still later in our progress as a nation there is an incident, and a precedent more striking and conclusive in its character. In 1835, when this Government, under the administration of General Jackson was in imminent danger of being involved in war with France, Great Britain tendered her mediation. It was accepted; both by us and by

the King of France, and a pacification between the two Governments was the result. Upon this point I cannot do better than to read a few sentences from the work of the distinguished gentleman from Missouri, [Mr. BENTON.] After alluding to the state of things which then existed—the exhaustion of negotiations and the preparatory armaments on both sides, he refers to the fact that General Jackson sent in a message to Congress, announcing his acceptance of the mediation, and uses the following language:

"In communicating the offer of the British mediation the President expressed his high appreciation of the 'elevated and disinterested motives of that offer.' The motives were, in fact, both elevated and disinterested; and presents one of those noble spectacles in the conduct of nations on which history loves to dwell. France and the United States had fought together against Great Britain; now Great Britain steps between France and the United States to prevent them from fighting each other. George the Third received the combined attacks of French and Americans; his son, William the Fourth, interposes to prevent their arms from being turned against each other. It was a noble intervention, and a just return for the good work of the Emperor Alexander in offering his mediation between the United States and Great Britain—good works these peace mediations, and as nearly divine as humanity can reach;—worthy of all praises of long remembrance, and continual imitation;—the more so in this case of the British mediation when the event to be prevented would have been so favorable to British interests—would have thrown the commerce of the United States and of France into her hands, and enriched her at the expense of both. Happily the progress of the age which, in cultivating good will among nations, elevates great Powers above all selfishness, and permits no unfriendly recollection—no selfish calculation—to balk the impulses of a noble philanthropy.

These, Mr. Chairman, are just and noble sentiments in themselves, and concisely and handsomely expressed. Andrew Jackson, then at the head of our Government, was not a man likely to succumb to an adversary, or to admit improper interference from a foreign quarter. Nor did any man in these Halls, or in the country, censure his acceptance of the mediation. Every one knew that that *iron will*, before which the veteran columns of England were broken to pieces at New Orleans, would have been not less strikingly exhibited in defense of any right that could claim the protection of our flag.

It thus appears that each one of these three great Powers has, in periods of trial or danger to us, interfered for our relief; and shall we not reciprocate their good offices? Shall we be always ready to receive benefits, and never to return them? Shall we fold our arms, and coolly look on, while our former friends are struggling in the midst of perils? Above all, shall we refuse to act because we hope to take benefits from their misfortunes? Is a great Government like ours to occupy the position of the wrecker, who stands upon the sea-beach during the storm, praying that navies may be stranded, that he may seize upon the floating fragments? Shall we imitate the kite and the vulture that follow armies to prey upon the slain, or the sharks that collect around the sinking ship to devour the drowning inmates? If any gentleman here has such feelings, I envy him not their enjoyment.

If we were, as a nation, too feeble to protect ourselves, we might, upon the plea of necessity, justify being thus contemptible. We might then have an excuse for wishing that others might be crippled lest they should hurt us. But while in a war with any great maritime Power our commerce would seriously suffer, there is no nation in less danger of conquest or mutilation. We can,



therefore, afford to be just and honorable, yea, even magnanimous.

There is another reason, Mr. Chairman, which operates with great force on my mind as an argument for my proposition. The impression prevails in Europe, or, at all events, has been sought to be created there, that we are a grasping and a rapacious people. I do not, for a moment, admit the justice of this charge against us. On the contrary, I think the United States have shown, from their earliest history, a commendable moderation. I recollect very well being told by a gentleman who had just returned from Europe, whilst the Texas annexation was pending, that the veteran statesman Metternich said to him, there was not a Government in Europe that would have hesitated a moment to take Texas on the terms on which she offered herself. In fact, while England has been taking kingdom after kingdom in Asia, and France has been extending her conquests over Africa, and the other European Governments have been taking all the territory they could acquire without peril to themselves, we may well challenge a comparison with them.

I may say, further, in order that no gentleman may misunderstand the feelings with which I make these remarks, that I belong to what is called the party of progress, or to Young America. I am in favor of the acquisition of territory under proper circumstances. Nevertheless, while I entertain these opinions, and believe that injustice has been done to our country abroad, it is impossible to conceal the fact that the impression prevails in Europe that we desire this war to continue, in order that we may get an opportunity to seize upon our neighbor's territory. Now, by making this movement we shall truthfully, and at the same time, gracefully remove any such impression. Besides, sir, it would be a declaration of neutrality in the most emphatic form. It would not only be a declaration that our Government intended to stand neutral, but that it did not desire that the war should continue to the injury of the parties themselves. If the movement were to be successful—if we were to be instrumental in relieving these belligerents from their present difficulties, it would give us the greatest consideration, not only with the Governments, but also with the masses of the people.

I maintain that if our country and its Government becomes popular with the people of Great Britain and France, and with the other nations of Europe, the monarchs would not like to quarrel with us in opposition to the wishes of their subjects. But where there is ill-feeling between countries, a single spark will sometimes light the flames of war.

I have, Mr. Chairman, discussed this question mainly upon the narrow ground of our interests as a nation. This, however, is not the mode to do full justice to the subject. To do this will require a much wider range of thought and investigation. Independently of all calculations of interest, considerations of humanity rise up and force themselves upon the mind. The earth was given to man for his dominion and control. But it is only in our times that men are beginning to assert that right in its full extent. I do not mean to say that in former ages men have not been spread over the earth, but it is only in our day that they have begun to turn its great natural agents to account. This war will stop the progress of humanity. It will destroy the greatest and best works of man, and throw him back upon the barbarism of the past.

Besides, it is a war between the different branches of the great Caucasian family—the white races of men, who have shown by their superior mental and moral endowments, their right to control the world and regulate its destinies. It is also a war, in the main, between Christian nations; and we are impelled, therefore, by considerations of humanity, of race, and of religion, to interpose, if our interposition can avail anything. If the movement is to be made, it should begin here. We represent the feelings, the very heart of the American people; hence our sanction will give greater force and consideration to the movement. But to the Executive, who has the charge of conducting the foreign affairs of the country, it belongs properly to decide when and how the step should be taken. If there be not a fitting occasion just now, it may be otherwise a few months hence.

Entertaining these feelings, my original object was to bring the subject before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and let that committee determine whether such a movement was advisable; if it were, to let it begin with Congress, but leave to the Executive the mode and manner of conducting it. The President, of course, has an acquaintance with the condition of things which nobody else can possess, and to him, therefore, would I leave it to determine whether the movement should be made now or at some future day, and whether the offer of mediation should be tendered through the foreign ministers here or through our ministers abroad, or in any other mode that he might regard as best calculated to effect the object. Whenever he should think proper to act, he would then move in the matter with all the authority of the Government to sustain him. If the movement shall be made, I have no doubt but that it would be sanctioned and approved by our constituents.